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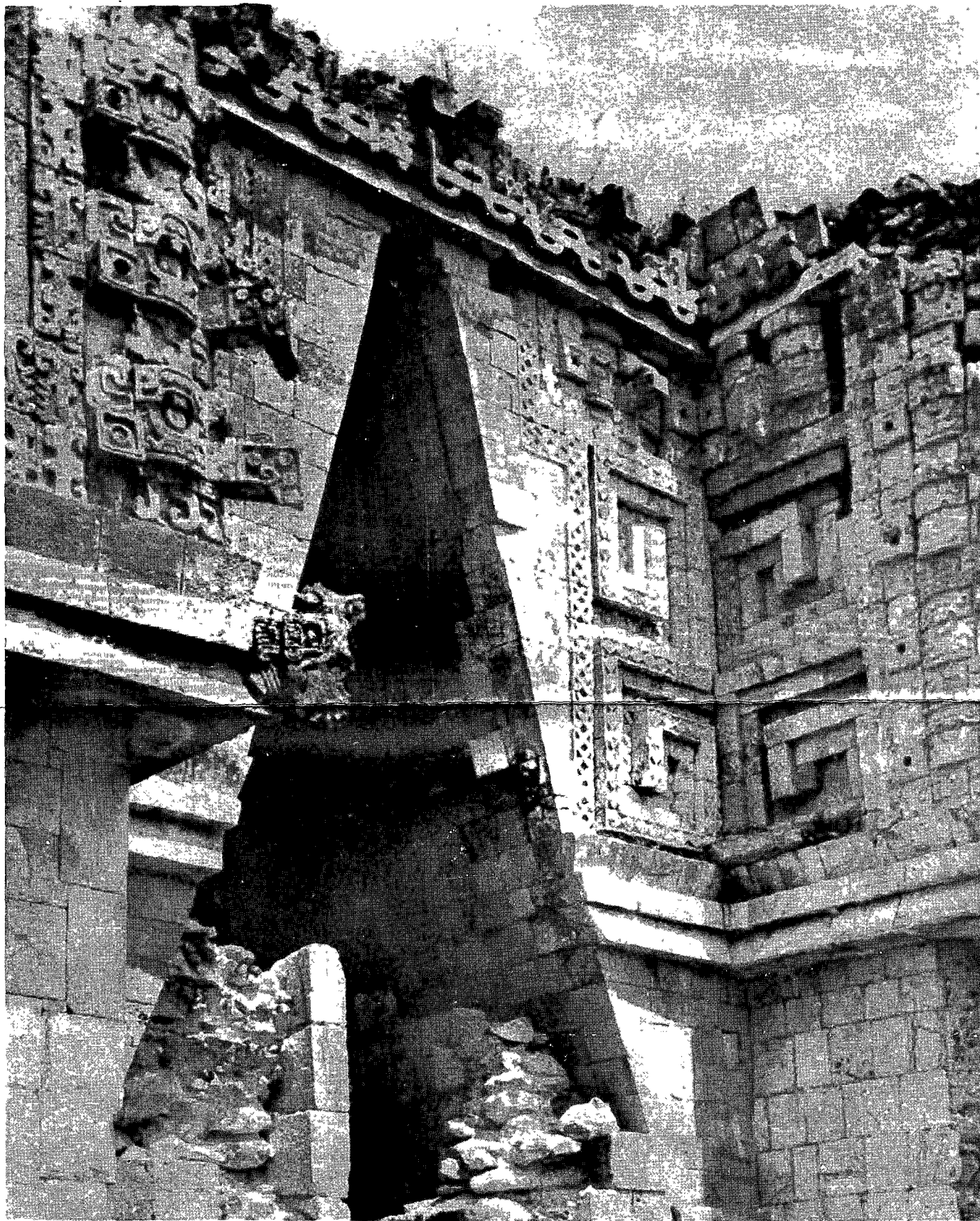
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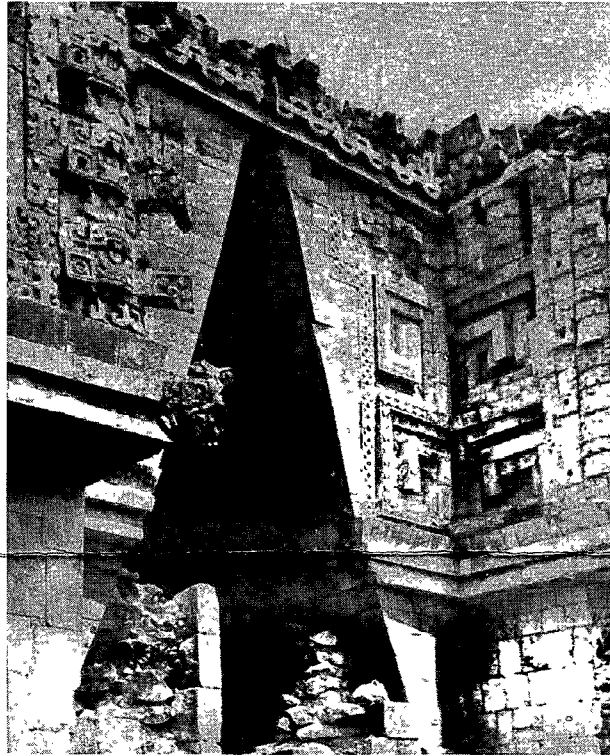
Number 155

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Photograph by Rose Dawn

*The Archway to the House of the Governors
(Yucatan)*



DO IT YOURSELF

Mayan Lesson Number 155

MAKE UP YOUR MIND

GET YOUR BEARINGS

WHAT IS LIFE ALL ABOUT ?

YOU ARE THE ONLY YOU

WHERE DO YOU FIT IN ?

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

CLEAR THE SHADOWS

MEDITATION

Beloved Centurion:

There is always an air of expectancy and excitement here at Headquarters as a new lesson series is begun. First, the needs of your class are taken into consideration, and the subject matter is decided upon. It is written in its first rough form, and then edited, and sometimes completely rewritten, again and again, until we feel that it is in its polished form and ready for your concentration and reflective meditation. Finally it is finished and ready, as good as we can possibly make it, for the mail which will carry it swiftly to you.

DO IT YOURSELF, which is the name of our new series of lessons, has become a great vogue, and we feel that this series of lessons is very much in step with the times. Recently, in a restaurant, I overheard two ladies talking, one complimenting the other on the beauty of the bag she was carrying, which was covered with sea shells. The lady who was admiring it commented, "What a beautiful bag. Did you do it yourself?" The other, with a very happy and pleased expression on her face, said yes, and that she had picked up the shells on the Florida coast, and made the bag herself. This is just a little human incident, but overhearing it just as these lessons were being prepared for you caused me to pass it on.

Do not, however, confuse this title with mending that rusty lock on the screen door, or painting the garage; for while this series does deal with mending a rusty lock, we are thinking of the one which, comparing it to ones body, opens the door to our hearts which sometimes is barred against those who need us on life's highway. And when we speak of painting the garage, we think of the feeling of renewal which comes to us when everything is bright and new; in other words, we can compare this to the feeling of spiritual and physical renewal which we experience when we have learned the importance of being 'born again'.

You have traveled a long distance on the path that leads ever onward and upward, and now that you have reached this stage in your development, your mind should be rich in the things you have learned about YOURSELF. I know that this is true because I have talked with many of our members in this class, from all over the United States and other countries, in the privacy of my study here in San Antonio, and they have told me so. Your thinking is different now, your attitude toward others is entirely different, your thoughts are deeper. You are a different 'you'.

AND - there is so much more to come. We never stop learning, we never stop growing. It sometimes amazes even me, in spite of my vast experience, to realize the greater possibilities for accomplishment when we gain true understanding.

There are some who feel that the greatest obstacle which keeps them from success is their environment. They feel that they should make a complete change in their lives and they fly hither and yon, much as a butterfly might do, trying to find a sweeter and better spot, only to fail in their quest. No, this is not the answer, as you will see in your study of this series. In my many years of helping people in all walks of life with their problems, I have learned that many

who are unhappy and dissatisfied with their place in life - whether it is their marriage, or their work, or their home, the place in which they live, regardless of what it may be - and are continuously desirous of making changes of all kinds, would have found happiness had they been able to learn that it isn't so much where we are or what we have to do, it is WHAT WE DO WITH IT. So many could be happy, contented, and successful, but are continuously looking for their happiness in some other direction. Make every effort to glorify the place you are now in. Sometimes, of course, this is impossible to do, but in many, many cases it can be done if we just make the effort - therefore I admonish you, "DO IT YOURSELF".

As an item of special interest to our members, the frontispiece used in this series of lessons was photographed by Rose Dawn in Yucatan. We feel that it is well adapted to this series of lessons, entitled DO IT YOURSELF, in that this particular Mayan Ruin, the Archway to the House of the Governors, was, of course, made by the ancient Mayans with their hands, and little else to help them. This beautiful architecture is one more example of the ability to "DO IT YOURSELF".

LESSON NUMBER ONE

MAKE UP YOUR MIND

P R A Y E R

Open my mind, Heavenly Father, to the fulness of Thy will for my life. Help me to realize that all this is possible, and to make my start toward its fulfillment in spirit, achievement, and condition. Amen.

<u>MAKE UP YOUR MIND</u>

T H I S is a time when do it yourself ideas are popular. Economic conditions have helped drive us to the discovery of certain important facts. First, the average person has the ability to make or do many things formerly bought readymade or done by a hired professional. Second, such creative work is fun. Doing things themselves are bringing many people pleasure as well as gain. Consequently whole books and magazines are being devoted to the do it yourself idea, and it is amazing what a wide scope it covers.

It is not exactly new. The writer once knew a man who had a genius for woodworking. He bought an old house, and working at odd hours and using the few tools he had he transformed its interior into something more attractive than the new houses of the time could boast. This creative work beautified the place, saved money, provided leisure time pleasure, and gave expression and cultivation

to a talent that otherwise would have gone to waste. It did him no harm professionally either, for he became one of the country's most noted men in his field.

The wave of do it yourself ideas has so far been confined to things to do with the hands, but there are structural skills not executed with the hands. Some of them are things you could not possibly buy or hire done. They are things one must do himself or they will never be done.

Do you want to live a certain kind of life or have a certain kind of a career? You will have to do it yourself. Do you want a certain kind of home or community life? You will have to make it yourself. Do you want a certain kind of day or year? It must come from your own workshop. Do you want a certain kind of viewpoint or attitude, a certain kind of relation to others, or a certain approach to anything? Do it yourself, but you will first have to make up your mind.

This series of lessons deals with a number of fundamental things that need to be done, but that only you can do. The list will unfold as the lessons proceed. Possibly you have already done some of these things, or perhaps you have not realized the necessity of them and your ability to do them.

Not realizing one's own ability is one of the common losses. Too many assume that they cannot do this or that, or thoughtlessly put it off too long. ~~Perhaps you cannot do what someone else has done, and possibly there is no reason why you should.~~ But what about the things you can do and be? They are part of your life, and among them are probably things you could do better than anyone else in the world. You do not do them only because you do not get started, and you do not get started because you do not make up your mind.

GET YOUR BEARINGS

A familiar phrase in academic study is, "Orient yourself". It means to look about and adjust your way of thinking and doing to the whole situation, so you can proceed intelligently with reference to all the people, things, facts, and forces involved. A simpler way of putting it is, "Get your bearings".

That is the first thing to do in any procedure, and certainly in what one proposes to live for and how he proposes to go about it. It certainly is necessary in any program of achievement or self-improvement. The failures are not always people who were not earnest and willing. They are often people who simply did not get their bearings before they started.

No doubt you have seen and admired a group of civil engineers at work determining a boundary, locating a piece of proposed construction, or laying out the course of a road. Even with no landmark from which to start they have ways of locating the point at which to begin and the way to proceed. The mariner does much the same thing on the notion with nothing in sight but the water and the sky.

We have to do something like that when we are undertaking a new program or checking an old one for errors and miscalculations. We have to do it by taking all the vital facts into account, appraising the situation, and determining where we stand in it, what the possibilities are, and how to begin to correct our course and go forward.

This may be either simple or confusing. As we grow older we become conscious of more influences pulling, pushing, holding, and driving us, and may feel overwhelmed. Youth does not wholly escape this either.

When life begins to seem too much for you, keep calm. Do not try to change the situation all at one stroke. So far you are only getting your bearings. Action is yet to come, so relax and face things fearlessly. You will find that many parts of the puzzle will fall into place. Gradually you will come to see what to do about the others. We fail in many things because we attack them too impatiently and try to set them right all at once. You do not have to finish this matter in a day. You have to take it as it comes, and it will be coming for a long time. Remember you are only beginning, and do not even begin till you get your bearings.

No doubt you have been in places where you lost your sense of direction. No doubt you have been where the contour of the land made an upward slope look like a downward one. No doubt you have been where peculiar and unnoticed turns in the road kept your mind going one way when the vehicle carrying you had turned into another. We come to such conditions in living too, so you not only have to get your bearings, but also to keep them. Don't trust your assumptions too far. Check the facts.

WHAT IS LIFE ALL ABOUT?

W H A T is this human existence all about anyway? That you must determine. At least you must begin to think it out, and have a general idea what it means to you and you to it.

This is a wonderful world, and it is part of an amazing universe. You are surrounded by vibrating forces taking on various material forms according to their groupings of energy. These so-called substances reflect or absorb ether waves in such a way as to cause color reactions in the brain. Atmospheric waves agitate a drum and move certain bones in the ear in such a way as to create the impressions of sound.

Here at the heart of all this is the person you call yourself. You are dwelling in a body which exists as a vast combination of vibrating energies, like a mountain, a rose, or a star. The real you is not a body, but a person dwelling in a body. The body is a house, and you are its tenant. You keep up the house, but you must not confuse yourself with it. It grows old, changes, and breaks down; but you do not. Finally it collapses, and you move into a better one. How did all this come about? We do not know all the details, but we can make

out some.

It had to come about through some kind of a creative process, and we know that we cannot have creation without a creator. Anyone can see that it is all arranged according to a vast and intricate plan, the order in which we can see more and more clearly as we study it; and anyone knows we cannot have a plan without a planner. We find infinite energy at work even in what we call inanimate substances, and we know that energy cannot exist without a source. We can see that some Infinite Cause is making patterns and energizing them into visible and tangible forms. We have found the Unknown Quantity in life's equation, so when we erase the X and write in the name of God it figures out.

The part of this vast system of creation of which you are most conscious is yourself. You can see that you must be definitely a part of the plan. You came upon the scene, a new link in the age-long, miraculous chain of life, a sentient, conscious being, with your own power to create, choose, love and save; and therefore bearing the image of your Maker.

You could not be all that, and not be here as a definite factor in the working out of some great plan. Never think of yourself as unimportant, and do not dare to live as though you were. God's world is by no means finished, and you are here to create something that will be a part of its perfection when it is perfected. Think of that whenever you look in the mirror or wonder what you are here for, and make yourself a credit to what you were born to be and do.

YOU ARE THE ONLY YOU

WE are told that among all the leaves on all the trees in the world no two are exactly alike, and that all the grassblades growing in all the fields do not have two exact duplicates. The Creator has general patterns, but each has its variations. He creates things similar but gives each and every one its own individuality.

This is just as true of human beings as it is of leaves and grassblades. Not one of us is made in exactly the same pattern as anyone else. We may resemble each other but there are always differences. This is true of body and personality alike and of both together. Among the billions of people on the earth now not one of your fellow human beings has exactly the same combination of characteristics as yourself. You are the only You.

If a group of people were taken somewhere to carry out a piece of work, or build a community, or establish a way of life, and if you found that each was different from all the others in abilities, skills, training, and experience, you would naturally assume that each had been brought there to express his own nature and carry out his own sense of responsibility. If you were one of them, and if you had some special aptitude, you would naturally feel that something like that was the reason for your being there.

Certainly a group of skilled and capable people would never assume that they were there for nothing; and each, knowing that he was the only copy of his particular combination of personal elements, would try to fill the kind of place indicated by them. Thus the group would become integrated into a kind of collective person living and working harmoniously toward the general purpose involved.

We run into trouble when we begin trying to be something other than ourselves and to fill some other place than our own. If the parts of machines did that, our machinery would all soon be wrecked. If the organs and tissues of the body did that, we would all soon be in devastating trouble. If the stars and the planets did that, we would soon have the most dazzling fireworks display of all time, and the last. But in all these cases each part remembers that it is the only one of its kind, and must therefore keep its own place and play its own part.

We have gone to great pains to build up sets of classifications and distinctions, assuming that one is born higher, or should do easier work, or occupy a more honorable position than another. These distinctions are mostly imaginary. Sooner or later Life comes along and tears down these fences, reminding us that quality is something rooted in life itself, and that the test of a man is his manhood. God has honored each and every one of us with individuality fit to fill one responsible place in the world with more distinction and credit than anyone else can. You cannot fill anyone else's place, nor can anyone else fill yours, without marring the plan.

WHERE DO YOU FIT IN?

A L L this has been said to establish a clearer idea of yourself and the setting in which you have been placed, so you can build up an equally clear idea of the answer to the question, what next? Where do you go from here? We have said that this marvelous universe, physical and spiritual, is an integrated, purposeful thing. We have also said that you are an individuality different from any other person. But if the universe is a related thing, and if you are a part of it, you can only conclude that there is a place where you fit in just right; a place where you can live the best life, build the most worthy self, and do the most masterful work. Where is that place? Only you can know for sure. But a few suggestions may confirm that knowledge and help you to decide.

You are occupying some kind of a place in the scheme of things now. Unless you have wilfully refused to follow your light in choosing, it is probably the right one. At least it is probably the right one for now. For most of us the important thing is not changing to another place or work, but in making the most and best of the situation we have built around us. Any honorable place can be made a memorable one, and any honest work can be made an important one if it is done in the right spirit and with the right motive. We can build glory around any such situation if we will.

So with most of us the question where we fit in is answered by how much credit we can reflect on the place where we are. If yours is

a humble place, do not consider that this counts you out. It is a much grander thing to bring distinction to some humble place or task that needs it than to do it for one already made magnificent. Whatever else may be said about it, one place where any of us can fit into the situation effectively is to bring credit to our names and locality and work, right where we are.

Jacob made a little place famous by having a dream and building an altar there. David made a little place great enough for the Saviour's birthplace by being born there himself. Jesus made a mean little town immortal by living His childhood there. To put your mark on the spot where you are is better than to lose time and risk failure going around searching for a better place. There are not many "better places". We usually have to take one and make it better.

The place where you fit in is not so much a matter of location as of what you do there. Realize your importance, and know that making yourself necessary to your locality will heap more honor on your head than anything else you can do. Begin today to make your life count for as much as possible. If you fail, know you are being tested and try again.

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

"A L L the world's a stage", said Shakespeare, "and all the men and women merely players." Suppose we look at it that way a moment. Think of your locality as a stage, and all the people in it, including you, as enacting dramatic roles.

There are the setting, the scenery, the wings, the backdrops, the headlights and footlights, and the spotlight so dear to some actors but really not so important as they imagine, for the quality of one's playing is what counts.

Many of the stage effects are illusions. The sunshine, the moonlight, the water, the thunder and lightning, are machine-made, just as many of the things we think we see and hear are illusions. But we are not illusions, and the drama is not an illusion, and the conflict is not an illusion, and the final struggle-won triumph of the right is not an illusion. The fact that there will come a moment when the play is done, the curtain descends, the lights go out, and the spectators leave, and the play becomes a remembered effect - these are not illusions. The most definite fact of all is the time when all that matters is whether the ending was happy and how well you played your part.

There are certain set roles, and you will play one of them by choice. In writing a play the cast is formed rather arbitrarily. Each type of part is there and must be played by someone fitted for it. Your part is waiting for you when you come.

There are four general kinds of parts in a play. It has been said that there must be someone to love, someone to hate, and someone to laugh at. But that

is not quite the whole truth. There must usually be people to take up space and give the idea of numbers in scenes where numbers would naturally be expected. This reduces to the four types of character we know - the hero, the villain, the clown, and the super or foil. Which part are you playing now? Is it right for you? Could you do better?

The hero is, of course, the one who struggles to see right and justice done. He takes his role seriously and disregards all hardship and danger to bring the conflict to such a climax.

The villain is the opposite. His purposes are evil, and his final reward is sure and certain defeat.

The part of the clown is to make people laugh, and this rightly done is a helpful service to a race that has no happiness to spare.

The super has a pitiful part to play. His role is to be present but unnecessary, to wear clothes and occupy space. His group may be the largest in the play, for he is the crowd. His is the easiest part to play, but do not be content to play it. Its only reward is oblivion. Play a part in life that will make a difference, a difference for the better.

CLEAR THE SHADOWS

W H A T is the situation, and what is your relation to it, and what will you do about it? These are questions that need to be answered in making up your mind. They hang over the road like a fog, or they clamor in the street like a mob, confusing your mind. But this is a fog and this is a commotion you can do something to dispel.

There are three steps. First, study the situation till you think you understand it. As you do this it will gradually cease to be a jumble and become something you can analyze. Do not hold your head and lament. Just observe till things begin to fall into place, and you can begin to see what you can do about it.

Second, figure out what is needed to change this chaos and confusion into order, peace, and effectiveness. Discover what is doing the mischief and what can be done to substitute influences that will be constructive. What does your situation need? What does the collective life around you need? What do those need in whom you are especially interested? If this is covering too wide a scope, then what do you need to make your life satisfying to you AND HELPFUL TO OTHERS?

Third, consider how you are related to any of these needs. What can you do about any part of the situation, and what must you become to be able to do it?

The idea here is not one of merely meddling with people to improve them. It is rather one of improving yourself till you can be an inspiration to others without meddling.

This is not a program of loving your neighbor and neglecting yourself any more than the selfish life is doing the opposite. When you serve yourself alone you are not necessarily doing anything for anyone else, but when you bring blessing into the lives of others you find it being reflected back to you also.

The world is not finished. God brought it into being, and ever since then He has been trying to bring it nearer perfection to be a good place for a high order of people. This He must accomplish largely through us. The process is well on its way, but there is still a long way to go. Each of us has a place in that process. The part of each of us is to contribute to it at least one useful, honest, constructive life. That is what this is all about.

In the confusion and fury of the times there is room for more first rate lives. There is a place in the onmarching throng you can fill, a missing element in the making of the new world your life can supply. Your part now is to make that life the best one you can. That is what you need to make up your mind about now. Please keep this thought in mind as you repeat the following Meditation. May you be blessed in your efforts to enrich your life as you continue to build.

MEDITATION

The world I know has proceeded from the wisdom and the will of God. I shall see to it that some of its progress toward God's ultimate plan for it shall proceed from my thought and will.

Blessings,

YOUR CLASS INSTRUCTOR.